Increase of berths in reserved coaches

†676.SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that a result of increase in number of berths from 72 to 81 in reserve coaches, passengers are facing great inconvenience;

(b) whether complaints are received from passengers about the inconvenience caused due to this increase;

(c) whether any complaint has been received by Government in this regard or Government is aware of the public discontentment; and

(d) if so, the measures through which Government is considering to solve this serious problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. References from passengers about additional berths in the Sleeper coaches mainly were of inconvenience and discomfort caused by increased congestion and inadequate space.

(d) The policy has been reviewed. It has now been decided to discontinue the scheme of provision of additional side middle berths in sleeper class coaches. Such berths provided in the already modified coaches shall be gradually removed within a period of six months.

Fare concession to handicapped persons

677. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that handicapped persons do not get railway fare concessions in Rajdhani trains; and

(b) if so, the reasons for not extending the concession in those trains to handicapped persons?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Rajdhani trains are premium trains in which scope of concession has been kept limited to patronize full fare paying passengers.

Encroachment of railway land

678. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether for management of railway land, there are no separate land management cells in most of the zones and divisions and the work is entrusted to officials with other duties who are not trained to function as Estate Officers to decide on the cases of encroachments;

(b) whether Railways had given an assurance in Parliament in 1999 that there would be no fresh encroachments on railway land and whether despite this assurance more than 16,000 new encroachments have taken place; and

---

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.